



Riverside General Plan Program

Youth Topic Group Meeting Wednesday, June 4, 2003

On Wednesday, June 4, 2003, City of Riverside Planning staff and the General Plan consultant team led by Cotton/Bridges/Associates and MIG held a Youth Group Topic Meeting. The meeting provided an opportunity to give representatives from key organizations that have a stakeholder interest in Riverside's youth and youth programs. Attendees included:

Mimielle Goulatte, S.O.A.R. Inc.
Fonda McGensey, Safehouse
Benita Ramsey, UJIMA
Candy QuinPauce, Leaders of Tomorrow
Duke Steppe, City of Riverside Human Resources Department
Theresa McAllister, Youth Action Office
From the Park and Recreation Department were:
Mike Mitchell
Randy Solis
Jim Ellis
Harold Roes
Victoria Zendejas
Ted Orosco
Thom Mendoza
Steven Walker
Ronald Underwood
Jerry Hurley
Matt Lohr
Dawn Pin

Youth stakeholders groups were provided an overview of the General Plan Program and were provides a summary of the community visioning process conducted to-date.

Youth organizations and stakeholders were asked to identify how to best pursue the City's vision in the context of the following vision themes:

- A. How we work
- B. How we play

- C. How we live
- D. How we get around
- E. How we learn

The comments of the attendees are provided on the following pages.

Pursuing the American Dream

Most Riversiders and youth want to:

- Own their own home
- Live in a safe environment
- Have a voice in the community
- Have entertainment and places to go close to home
- Have a high paying job
- Maintain Riverside's small town feel

How We Work

The City needs to invest more in youth programs and job training. This could be in the form of internship and cooperative programs between schools and local businesses.

We have a lot of kids from Riverside and outside the City that train in Riverside at one of the colleges and universities and then leave. We don't want to continue this "brain drain".

We also have a lot of local kids that view Riverside as a "black hole". There are a lot of well paying construction jobs in Riverside; kids go into these jobs right out of high school and are still doing those jobs 20 years later.

At one point Riverside had a "*Learn and Earn*" program which was a cooperative/internship program for high school kids. These kids went to school for a certain number of hours then went to work at various businesses or agencies. Let's bring this program back.

We do have a lot of youth programs in the City, but we need to market these more.

All the City departments and non-profit youth agencies should come together and meet once a month. That way we could share ideas and market programs together. This could save time and effort.

We need more vocational training opportunities in Riverside. This could be a vocational school or smaller centers distributed throughout the community.

There is a Youth Opportunity Center in Magnolia. But because of federal funding restrictions, they are only allowed to serve a narrow margin of youth in the area.

There is another Youth Center that is planned to be built in the Eastside. Let's ensure that it gets built.

While every community in Riverside could benefit from a youth/community center, here are the neighborhoods that need it most:

- Eastside
- Casablanca
- Orangecrest
- Riverwalk
- Arlanza

Teens need more reliable, safe transportation to youth and community centers. Many teenagers do not have a car and do not want to walk near arterial roads or through gang territory.

We need to create a “One Stop Center” for youth. This could be a place where youth and teens of all ages can come to get a variety of services or at least referrals to other places. This “One Stop Center” can include college information, job training, recreation facilities, educational courses, counseling, and other activities.

We need more field spaces in the community for little leagues for baseball and football games.

We need a major aquatic center.

Many kids in Riverside need activities after school there is not enough activities to keep kids occupied and they end up hanging out in somebody’s house or getting into trouble.

Teens also need transportation.

Make use of joint-use facilities to save resources. “The school lights are always on”.

How We Play

We need more garden parks around the community. These could be places to unwind and relax.

We need more low-cost or free cultural programs for kids. This could include field trips to museums, art/crafts classes and dance classes. This could translate into an “Arts Taster Plate” at little or no cost for Riverside’s youth.

We should continue to plant trees in Riverside.

Youth want to be included and have input in the community. They should help design programs that they would want.

We need more havens for “hang-out” time.

Older teens are at risk for trouble after 5:00 p.m.

How We Live

Sometimes older kids have to look after their younger siblings a lot. We need youth centers that offer program for kids of all ages.

Every community in Riverside needs a “One Stop Center” or at least adequate transportation to a center.

Riverside has many unique and distinct neighborhoods. This is an asset and a detriment to the community. There is often a clannishness or cliqueness to different neighborhoods. This makes kids reluctant to come out of their safety zone of their community.

We could use more “Big League of Dreams”. This is a privately-owned indoor softball, basketball, recreational facility. This provides opportunities to play but also bring in revenue and doesn’t cost the City any money.

We need programs for homeless individuals and families. There is a movement to remove the homeless from parks and streets but we also need to provide shelters and supportive services as well. There is no shelter for families in Riverside only one for men.

How We Get Around

Three miles can be 300 miles depending on bus service and where you live. Some places are also hard to get to because of gang territory, crossing trains, and topography.

We need a bus system specifically to serve parks and recreation activities.

Field trips are often neutral events for teens. At one time Riverside had a program that provided teens and opportunity to volunteer hours and “earn” a field trip. Kids from all over Riverside would get together for this opportunity. Since this was a neutral event, there were never any problems or friction.

Buses sometimes stop at 9:00 p.m., and if there is a program that goes late, the kids are stuck.

At-risk kids will often go to these events/field trips and get along with other kids. But hard-core gang-members will not go to these activities.

We need a City that’s kids friendly.

How we learn

We need more intervention programs for kids that have been expelled or have dropped out of school.

“Teens” are a difficult population group challenged with childcare. There are too old for daycare or babysitters but are too young to be on their own.

There is a lack of adequate counseling at high schools. A lot of kids don’t know about applying to college or SATs and end up not going to college.

We need college counseling classes or workshops at youth and community centers. This could be provided at the “One Stop Centers”.